

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A multi-purpose holder for supporting an article in a vehicle comprising:
a support member for supporting an article;
a sensor adapted to generate a signal that is a function of a desired position of said support member; and
an actuator selectively coupled to said support member, said actuator operable to enable said support member to move in response to said signal.
2. The multi-purpose holder according to Claim 1, wherein said support member is movable by said actuator to a position which is adjacent to the article to provide support for the article.
3. The multi-purpose holder according to Claim 1, wherein said multi-purpose holder further comprises a plurality of sensors, each of said plurality of sensors is adapted to generate a signal that is a function of a desired position of said support member.
4. The multi-purpose holder according to Claim 1, wherein said sensor includes a field effect device.
5. The multi-purpose holder according to Claim 1, wherein said sensor includes an optical sensor.
6. The multi-purpose holder according to Claim 1, wherein said desired position of said support member is determined as a function of a condition of said article as detected by said sensor, and wherein said condition of said article includes at least one of the liquid level within the article, the height of the article, the diameter of the article, the width of the article, the perimeter of the article, the weight of the article, and the pressure exerted by the article.

7. The multi-purpose holder according to Claim 1, wherein said multi-purpose holder further includes a body structured and configured to receive the article.

8. The multi-purpose holder according to Claim 7, wherein said body defines a recess for receiving the article.

9. The multi-purpose holder according to Claim 7, wherein said desired position is a function of the presence of the article within the body.

10. The multi-purpose holder according to Claim 7, wherein said body defines a substantially horizontal support surface for vertically supporting the article.

11. The multi-purpose holder according to Claim 10, wherein said sensor is positioned near said support surface of said body.

12. The multi-purpose holder according to Claim 1, wherein said sensor is positioned near said support member.

13. The multi-purpose holder according to Claim 1, wherein said support member comprises an inflatable bladder.

14. The multi-purpose holder according to Claim 1, wherein said support member comprises a flexible member, said flexible member surrounding at least a portion of the article when the article is disposed within said multi-purpose holder, wherein portions of said flexible member are movable to engage the article.

15. The multi-purpose holder according to Claim 1, wherein said support member comprises a plurality of arm members.

16. The multi-purpose holder according to Claim 15, wherein each of said arm members is pivotable mounted.

17. The multi-purpose holder according to Claim 1, wherein said support member is spring biased to at least one of a plurality of positions.

18. The multi-purpose holder according to Claim 1, wherein said support member is vertically movable between a plurality of positions for engaging the article at different height locations of said article.

19. The multi-purpose holder according to Claim 1, wherein said actuator comprises one of a gear rack assembly, a cam assembly, and a linear tooth rack.

20. The multi-purpose holder according to Claim 1, further comprising a controller, wherein said controller is a microprocessor capable of receiving said signal from said sensor and actuating said actuator.